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Greer family reminiscences

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**GREER  
FAMILY  
REMINISCENCES**

by  
**Ben F. Greer**

Published by the  
**WASHINGTON COUNTY  
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GREER FAMILY

REMINISCENCES

by

Ben F. Greer

"I hope that I have lived so you, my  
dear ones, can look back to our family  
with reverence. And to the God who has  
so abundantly blessed me and my weak  
efforts of service I commend you."

-- Ben F. Greer



## INTRODUCTION

The family history and the early-day reminiscences in this book were written in longhand by the late Ben F. Greer in 1941 when he was 74 years old. His purpose was to leave a record for his children and grand children. The contents of his manuscript, however, are of much wider interest, containing, as they do, first-person accounts of such pioneer activities as prairie chicken hunts, maple sugar making, and revival meetings at the old Vineyard church. Also, the author records historic events that he learned from his parents and grandparents; such as Civil War action on the Indian border, the Fisher-Shannon feud, and the origin of the Shannon Pippin apple.

Ben Greer's great-grandfather on his mother's side was Hugh Shannon, one of Washington County's earliest settlers. As a matter of fact, the Shannons, along with the McGarrahs, Simpsons and Alexanders, were established here before there was a Washington County -- before 1828.

On his father's side Ben Greer was descended from a great-grandfather who fought in the American Revolution and who emigrated from Tennessee to Missouri in 1821. The Greers, however, did not come to Washington County until 1854 and then quite accidentally. They were bound for Texas, camped one night in the beautiful hills at Evansville -- and remained.

The influence of the Shannons and Greers on Washington County history cannot be measured. The Shannon story is perhaps better known. Yet the Greers pioneered on our county's western border before the War and they helped bring law and order to this section. Ben Greer's grandfather, James W. Greer, and five of the latter's sons served in the Confederate army. Four of them died while in the service.

Ben Greer, the writer of these Reminiscences, was born in 1867. He himself helped make history, through his services as pioneer school teacher, postmaster at Evansville, county clerk and county judge, and county agricultural agent.

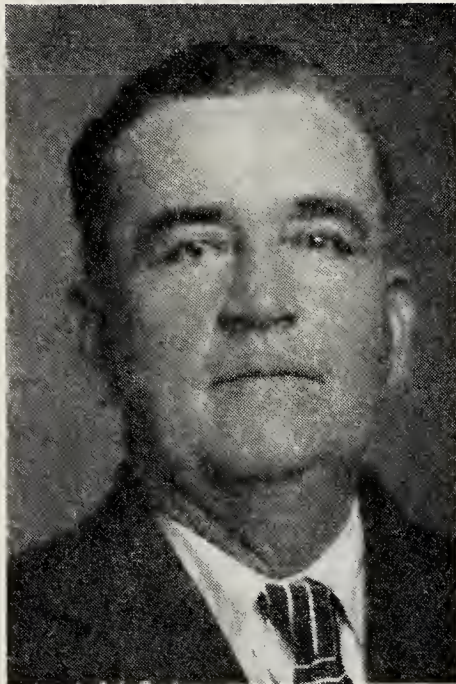
One of his greatest services, in my opinion, was the writing of the manuscript of this book. It is not only a family history but an intimate account of the joys and sorrows of pioneer life in Washington County.

-- W. J. Lemke, editor,  
Washington County Historical Society

Fayetteville, Arkansas,  
March 1956







**BEN F. GREER**  
1867 - 1942



# REMINISCENCES OF EARLY DAYS IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

by Ben F. Greer

I was born July 30, 1867. In a few days I will have passed my 74th birthday. Owing to poor health I am sure that my remaining sojourn here can't be long at the best, and desiring that my children and grandchildren may have a better knowledge of our family, I am writing this that they will know at least as much of our family history as I do and can impart to them. If, when a boy, I had realized the satisfaction of knowing all I could of our family history that one can know during the life of my Grandmother Greer and Grandfather Shannon I could have learned a lot more about our forefathers than I do know. So I am sure that my children will be glad to have this little information which they can in turn impart to their children.

My parents on both sides were of pioneer stock. My ancestors on father's side of the family were of Scotch-Irish stock and three brothers came over from County Clare, Ireland, among the early settlers. One settled in Pennsylvania, one in Virginia and the other in the Carolinas. My immediate family were descendants of the one who settled in Virginia. My great-grandfather Greer was a soldier in the Revolutionary War and after it was over in the 1780's or 1790's he emigrated from Virginia to Middle Tennessee and settled in Davidson County where my grandfather James W. Greer was born in 1802. He had eight brothers.

My grandmother Greer's maiden name was Michael Elizabeth Brown. Her ancestors were of Dutch descent and her father's family came to Penn's Colony which became Pennsylvania. After the Revolutionary War her father emigrated from Pennsylvania to Williamson County, Tennessee, about the same time that great-grandfather Greer settled in Davidson County. My grandmother Greer was born in 1803. In 1821 she and my grandfather married and emigrated to Missouri, settling east of Kansas City in LaFayette County, Mo., near Lexington and Warrensburg. One of grandfather's brothers, Joseph Greer, emigrated to Ray County, Mo., near the town of Dover. This was at that time sparsely settled. Grandfather Greer's nearest neighbor was three miles; the next was five miles. This is a very rich blue-grass country and grandfather entered a thousand acres of this fine land. There was an abundance of wild game and at one time grandfather shipped several hundred pounds of deer hams, commonly called Venison, and at the same time several hundred pounds of honey made by wild bees. He and a neighbor made a flat boat on the Missouri River and took their produce by boat to New Orleans where they trans-shipped their meat and honey to New York, sold it, and invested the proceeds in farm implements and other necessities and shipped back to Missouri.

I remember some stories my father used to tell about grandfather's hunting exploits. One time he was out hunting deer and shot and wounded a large buck deer. The deer fell at the crack of his rifle and he ran up to cut its throat so it would bleed good. When he took hold of the deer's horns to turn its throat, the deer struggled to its feet and knocked his hunting knife out of his hand. He knew he had to hold



to the deer's horns so it could not stamp him to death. His clothing was buckskin but in the struggles it fairly cut his hunting clothes to ribbons. He struggled till finally he got hold of his rifle and got behind a large hawthorn bush. The deer chased him around and around. Reloading his gun and shooting it again and again he fired 24 balls into it before it was finally killed. He said he never ran in to cut another deer's throat till he knew it was safe to do so.

Another time he and a neighbor were out on a hunt and had for some reason been unable to kill anything except some coons and all the meat they had in camp was coon meat. So this day they had better luck and grandfather shot and wounded a large deer. The neighbor ran in to cut its throat and had dropped his knife and was hollering "Run, Greer, run; we haven't anything but coon meat in camp." Grandfather got so tickled that he couldn't hurry as fast as the neighbor kept yelling, "Run, Greer, run; we've nothing but coon meat in camp", but he finally got in and between them and they finished their game with his hunting knife.

Another story was about someone stealing corn from his crib, which was built of logs. He suspected a neighbor, so one evening the neighbor was there and grandfather got the neighbor to help him set a steel trap inside at the crack they had been taking corn out of. But when the neighbor had gone he moved the trap to another place they could reach into and get corn. Next morning the neighbor was standing at the corn crib with his hand in the crack. Grandfather never let on that he had seen him and began feeding his stock. Finally the man hollered and asked grandfather to let him loose, which he did. He made the man go to the house where he dressed his hand and made him stay for breakfast and filled a sack with corn and told him that he would let him have all the corn he needed and let him work to pay for it and told his neighbor if he would never do that again he would never tell of the incident to his neighbors. The man agreed, so they both lived up to the agreement and the man was never again known to steal.

Another time grandfather started to the county seat on some business. As he was passing a house he heard a woman screaming and calling for help, so he jumped off his horse and dropped the bridle rein over a post and ran into the house. A man had a woman down and was choking and beating her, so Granddad took hold of him and pulled him off the woman. The fellow turned on him and he had to fight him off. The woman jumped up and got the stove shovel and began to hit Granddad with it and between the two he saw he was in for it, so he made a break, got out of the house and escaped. So he said he never tried to pull another man off when he was beating his wife. He just didn't butt in.

In 1849 when gold was discovered in California, Grandfather's oldest son and the two boys next to him went to California with Bullard's wagon train. Bullard took a stock of goods from Kansas City, hauled with wagons pulled by four and six-mule teams. Uncle George, my father's oldest brother, was married. He took his own wagon and team and wife and children. The other two boys hired to Bullard as teamsters.

In 1854 grandfather sold his land, 1,000 acres of as fine land as I ever saw, for \$8 per acre. He intended to go to California when he sold out. But about this time some of those who went out in the Gold



Rush began to return. Some had done well and saved a lot of money while some came back poorer than when they went. But all agreed that crossing the desert was an awful hardship and many had died, not able to stand the hardships. Then they had some fearful stories about having to fight the Indians, so my grandmother Greer began to beg grandfather not to go to California and suggested that they go to Texas instead. So they started to Texas.

They got down to what is now Evansville Valley in Washington County (Arkansas) and camped for a day or two to rest themselves and their teams. Grandfather liked the valley, so they bought several hundred acres of land and a store and stock of goods north of Evansville at what was then called Wilsonville.

George Greer, my father's oldest brother, died in California and was buried at a place called Santa Rosa. So the other boys brought his widow and children (two boys and two girls) back to Missouri near grandfather's old home in Lafayette County.

Grandfather and his boys prospered and did well until the Civil War broke out. Grandfather's land was scattered up and down the Arkansas and Indian Territory line and you could stand in front of his store and throw a rock across the line into what was then the Indian Territory. The Cherokee Indians were divided, most of the full-bloods and practically all the mixed-bloods went with the Confederacy and enlisted under Gen. Stand Watie. The full-bloods, called the Pin Indians, robbed, murdered and pillaged the Southern sympathizers and often robbed and sometimes killed those who were on the Northern side.

The Pin Indians accompanied by some renegades raided up and down the line every few weeks. On one of these raids they murdered my grandfather Greer and scalped him. He was barely able to ride a horse, as he was just recovering from a spell of typhoid fever. My father, a 16-year-old boy, was with his father, who told him to get away if he could, and he escaped, as he had a very fleet running horse. The women of the community went and got his body away in the night. There was no one to go but the women, as all the men and boys old enough to help were either in the army or had to refugee to Texas. The women had to bury their dead. There were nine boys in grandpa Greer's family and one girl. One of the boys and the daughter died in their infancy.

Five of father's brothers were in the Confederate army, besides himself. Four of them died of disease and exposure, so at the close of the war only he and one brother and my grandmother were left of their large family. My father was only 14 years old when the war began, and after grandfather's death there were just two alternatives left him -- either join the army or refugee to Texas, so when a little past 16 years of age he enlisted in Gen. Stand Watie's command. He never participated in any battles but was in several skirmishes. Once his company came to Fayetteville in an attempt to oust the Federal forces here.

He was in the cavalry and in the detail to guard their battery of artillery. He said he was scared and that it was all he could do to keep from running when the Federal forces attacked the Confederate battery of artillery. His company was lying on the ground in front of the battery and he said he could hardly keep from running. But after the



fight started, he wasn't scared any more and they repulsed the attack on their battery. The battery then withdrew and marched south.

Later they had another skirmish with Federal troops in the Indian Territory. The Confederates were cutting and putting up hay west of Fort Smith about 30 or 40 miles. The Federal forces with headquarters at Fort Smith attempted to break up the hay making of the Confederates. The Confederates formed a line to fight the Federals back, and during this skirmish one of the Confederate soldiers named Gov Smith ran and hid behind a knoll on the prairie. After this the Confederate soldiers made his life a burden. Father said some soldiers up at the head of their line would yell out "Who hid behind the knoll!" Down the line another soldier would yell out and say "Gov Smith" and then on down the line several soldiers would yell out "That's so" and they kept this up until the skirmish was over and that they kept it up from time to time till Smith told the boys that he was scared so bad he simply couldn't stand the strain and ran and got behind the knoll.

In the battle of New Orleans (in the War of 1812), one of grandmother Greer's brothers who was in General Jackson's army was one of the very few American soldiers killed in that battle. I am trying to learn his given name but so far have not learned it.

When grandfather Greer and his brother emigrated to Missouri, there was for some time no organized local government, no mail routes or postoffice near where they settled. They lost touch with the family back in Tennessee, so grandmother Greer could not tell us what happened to those left behind.

However, about 52 years ago I met and got acquainted with a man who had lived in Davidson County, Tennessee, and knew of the Greers there. He said that the Greer family back there were among the best citizens of the county. They were well-to-do people and were among the civic leaders of the county. So I am convinced that our ancestors were good citizens and leaders even back in the earlier days of our great country. They had the pioneer spirit and when the section they lived in got fairly well settled, the younger ones emigrated to the newer sections where they could have plenty of elbow room.

Now we will add to this story our mother's side of the story: Early in 1826 a group of citizens living in northern Kentucky on the Ohio River (six families) decided they would emigrate to the country west of the Mississippi River where they could find more room and acquire homes.

These six families -- two families of Simpsons, two of McGarrahs and one of the Billingsleys and one of the Shannons -- built flatboats on the Ohio River, loaded their household effects, a few tools, some horses and cattle, and family on these flatboats and drifted down the Ohio River to the Mississippi, then south on the Mississippi to the mouth of the Arkansas River and poled up that stream to where the present town of Van Buren is located. Here they unloaded their goods and stock, and packed their possessions on the horses and cows and trailed up through the mountains and settled in the valley north of the Boston Mountains. The first white settlers in Washington County. My grandfather was nine years of age when his father, Hugh Shannon,



settled in Washington County. This country at that time was heavily timbered, open woods, and covered with grass knee-high. Game of all kinds was abundant -- squirrels, wild turkeys, deer, bear, wolves, panthers -- in fact, all kinds of game, the largest the buffaloes which ran in large herds.

These settlers built cabins and cleared small fields and planted gardens and some corn. In August a troop of cavalry from Fort Gibson in the Indian Territory, learning these families had settled in this section, decided they were trespassing on the Indian Territory. They ordered the settlers to leave. The settlers told them they could not move; they had no place they could go to and would have to harvest their crops to have food for the winter. Thinking to force the settlers to leave, they cut their corn down with their swords. And as soon as the soldiers left, the settlers went out and shocked their corn. One of these settlers had made no path to his field and the soldiers had failed to find his field and cut his corn down. So his corn supplied grain to make bread for all the settlers the following winter. The corn was just out of the roasting ear stage and was used for feed and while very much shriveled they used this corn for seed the following season and from it they grew a fine corn crop.

There was an abundance of game from which they supplied their needs for meat. They had good hunting dogs and my grandfather, 9 years of age, went squirrel hunting and his dogs bayed a black bear. Grandfather shot at close range and wounded the bear. In the excitement, undertaking to reload his gun to finish the kill, he spilled his powder which he had wrapped in a rag. Seeing the bear crippling his dogs, he yelled for help and his older brother came to his help and they killed the bear, which weighed about 300 lbs.

In 1828 the government surveyed the boundary line of the Indian Territory and found these white settlers were well outside of the Indian reservation. Settlers came in rapidly to settle this northwest part of the state. Many of the settlers were from Kentucky, Tennessee, North and South Carolina. The first settlement was the valley where the town of Evansville is located, in the southwest part of the county, then on to Cane Hill, Prairie Grove, Farmington and Fayetteville. Quite a few settlers who had settled first around Little Rock and Crystal Hill, moved on up into Washington County.

My great-grandfather, Hugh Shannon, was one of the first court jurors ever selected in the county. He was also named as one of the first election judges. The first township laid out in the county was Vineyard Township, which is in the southwest corner of the county.

A year or two after my great-grandfather came here, a family named Oliver emigrated to the county and settled east of Cane Hill and south of Prairie Grove, near the head-waters of Cane Creek. There were several boys and girls in this family. My grandfather married one of the daughters named Pernarza Oliver. She died at the age of 35. To them were born three sons and four daughters. The sons were Thomas Jefferson, Finis, and William Malachi. The daughters were Margaret, the second daughter's name I have forgotten, third Martha J., and the youngest my mother, Mary Elizabeth.



Uncle Jeff and Uncle Finis both enlisted in Gen. Stand Watie's brigade and Uncle Finis, for whom I was named, accidentally killed himself. He had come home from the army on a short furlough. He kept his army rifle hid in the bed between the straw tick and feather tick. In pulling his gun out, it accidentally discharged, killing him instantly. He had received word that a band of Pin Indians and renegade whites were coming on a raid and in a hurry to get out where he could get into the mountains and back to his company, he must have become careless and discharged his gun accidentally.

Uncle Mack, as we called him, was too young to enlist and he refugeed with grandfather to Fort Smith where the Federal forces were in command. The women folks also went to Fort Smith but came home every year and made a crop. Aunt Margaret married a Union soldier named Bailey, and her sister, the next oldest, married a Union soldier named Rogers. Grandfather Shannon, a Southerner, was very angry with them for marrying Union men and never forgave them.

I never met or knew Bailey, as he lived near Springfield, Mo., though Aunt Marg and a daughter visited us when I was a small boy. The daughter Hettie, was almost grown. In 1914, after I became County Agent in Carroll County, I met a William Bailey who lived at Oak Grove in that county. He was a leading citizen of the community. One day I visited his store to ask about the leading farmers of that section, that I might interest in my work as County Farm agent. I was sitting in a chair on one side of the stove and he in a chair on the other side. He asked me where I was from. I told him, and then he asked if I knew any Shannons there. I said Yes, I ought to, for my mother was a Shannon. He jumped up and came around and took my hand and said, My mother was a Shannon too and I guess you are my cousin. So we found it to be true. He had never been back to the country and had never seen any of his mother's people. He is still living but in poor health, had a fine wife and reared a nice family, and is a Baptist preacher worthy of any one's respect.

Rogers settled at Cane Hill after the war and early after I got old enough to be interested in people I got acquainted with his son, William Rogers. He was a poor boy and when he went to ask Mr. Sam Reed for the hand of his daughter, Reed said "If you can't make her a living, what will you do?" He promptly replied "I'll bring her back to you." Mr. Reed said all right but don't wait till she gets too hungry. They settled on Cane Hill where he cleared land, built a home and set an apple orchard. He farmed and bought chickens and eggs and hauled them to Fayetteville and sold to produce shippers. He told me the first money he made after he married he made by growing 10 acres of sorghum cane which he made into sorghum molasses. He made enough to buy a good team, new wagon and harness, and had enough money to operate a produce wagon. He saved his money and finally sold his orchard farm for a good price and bought new land and cleared it and set another orchard. He is living now at Lincoln, is in poor health and is feeble. He reared a large family, one of his sons he named for me, is living in Fort Smith. His wife died two or three years ago and he is in his 80's and connected with the Bank at Lincoln. He is an honored citizen of that community.



Uncle Jeff Shannon married Cynthia Denton after the war and reared 5 sons and 3 girls, all dead but one daughter Clara who married J. M. White. They live at Stilwell, where he is in the mercantile business. Later Uncle Jeff married Amanda Goodrich and by her had one daughter, who married Joe Miller and now lives in Kansas. Uncle Jeff's wife Amanda died and he again married, Zoe Howerton. Two sons and two girls were born to them. His widow and the girls live in California and the boys in Kansas.

Uncle Mack Shannon married Leney Carruther. Two boys and one daughter were born to them. Leland, the oldest son, lives near Stilwell, Okla. Walter, the second son, lives at Pittsburg, Kansas, served as County Clerk two terms. May, the daughter, married a Hatchell. They live near Los Angeles, Calif. After Aunt Leney died, Uncle Mack married Susan Garrett, who gave birth to three boys -- Charles, dead; John, living near Stilwell; Vandy, living near Stilwell -- and two girls -- Myra, living in the west; the younger daughter died.

Uncle Jeff and Uncle Mack are both dead. Aunt Mat, as we always called her, married John McKinney and they had five boys -- William, the oldest, is dead; Eddie, Charles, Bryant and Elmer, all living in Texas the last we knew of them. We have had no word from any of them since Uncle John died 30 years ago.

Grandfather Shannon married a widow named Crutchfield after he lost his first wife. They had one son named Lowery, who was accidentally killed, dropped his pistol which discharged and the ball penetrated his intestines. He married a Miss Hackman and at the time of his death they had two children -- a son Alex who lives in Washington State, and Edith who also lives in the west or did the last we heard from them.

My father married Grandfather's youngest daughter in September 1866 and to them were born two sons, Benjamin Finis, named for one of father's brothers and one of mother's brothers, born July 30, 1867; Walter A., born February 29, 1872; Ida Lee, born September 8, 1869; Clara M., born November 27, 1875; Edna E., August 22, 1877; Mary Leona born March 21, 1879; Florence J., born April 3, 1885. My sister Ida married Robert B. Worsham August 21, 1887; died without issue May 25, 1888. I married Lulu B. Flinn on March 10, 1889. To us were born five boys and two daughters. Sister May and James H. Neff were married November 30, 1893; to them were born three daughters and five sons. Of the girls, Irene, the oldest, married Hooper who died and she remarried. Clara married a Mr. Jones. They live near Fort Smith. Betty, the youngest, who lives at Houston, married and has two children.

Joe, the oldest son, lives near Stilwell, Okla. George and Greer, the next two sons, live in Colorado. Wendle lives in New Jersey. The single son lives with his mother and sister Irene in California at Los Angeles. Sister Leona married twice. Her first husband was named A.C. Baird. They had one daughter, Fannie J., living at Seville, Florida, married to W. B. McBride. A. C. Baird was killed in an auto accident in 1924. Later, Leona married a Mr. Joe McLenan. She and her last husband are both dead. My sister Edna married Ben C. Barham in 1899. They have two sons, William K. and Gordon, both married and each has two daughters. Ben, who was a railroad man, is retired, and they and their sons and



grandchildren, all live near each other. Kenneth is on the police force and Gordon a mail handler at Union Station.

Sister Florence first married a man named McGuire by whom she had a son named William J. She and McGuire were divorced and Florence was given custody of Billie who took the name of her second husband, Joe London. Billie is married, has a fine girl and boy, and lives in Kansas City where he has a position with the Southwest Bell Telephone Company.

As a boy, growing up, I had an uneventful life. I can remember only one fight after I was any size. I was about 16 years old when my father sent me to town (Evansville) one day to get some brooms that a broom maker had made for him out of broom corn he had grown. I was paying the clerk in the store the money to give to the broom maker when a drunk full-blood Indian grabbed my arm and jerked me around and said "Me got gun, six times shoot, get outside, me shoot at you." It scared me, for he kept trying to get his pants up over his boot-top. I was sure he had a gun in his boot. I laughed and told him I didn't want trouble. He kept trying to push me out of the store. I caught the eye of the clerk in the store. He nodded his head across the counter where I saw a shotgun. I jumped over the counter and got the gun and as I walked around the counter an older Indian came up. He was partly drunk but he said "Don't hurt him, I'll take him away." I said "All right. I don't want any trouble. I never saw him before and don't know him." So he got the Indian by the arm and they started out. I set the gun down and went around by the brooms to get them and get going towards home. The two Indians got to the store door where they stopped and jabbered in Cherokee. They were both full-blood Cherokees. I decided that he wasn't going and that I'd have to fight him, so I picked up a heavy iron scale-weight and held it in my coat pocket, and when he started towards me I met him about halfway and he struck at me with his fist when I let him have it with the weight. I grabbed him in his collar and as he fell I swung him around and began to pound him in the face. I had dropped the weight when I hit him the first time. Every time I'd hit him, the blood would spout out of his nose and up my coat sleeve. The clerk caught hold of me and pulled me off, saying, Don't kill him. When he pulled me off, he lay there unconscious. So I got my brooms and lit out for home. I thought I'd killed him, so when I got home I told my dad about it and that I'd better leave. Dad said "No, if you killed him, he's paid for". So he got on his horse and went over to town to see the Indian. He came to, and they had dragged him out of the store. He had a half-circle cut in his forehead through the skin. He waylaid me once after that but there were too many of our crowd so they waited till we were about a quarter past the thicket they were hid in. They gobbled and whooped and shot their pistols off, but that was all there was to it. I met him once after that. He asked if I was afraid of him. I said No and he said "I good friend to you". Poor fellow died the next summer of tuberculosis and I was relieved for he was treacherous and they never forget. So that was the only real exciting scrap I ever had after I was old enough to realize just what it might have terminated in.

I forgot to say that my mother's people were Irish but of course the name Shannon tells one that they were of Irish descent. My memory is that her people came from County Mayo, Ireland. Other Shannons came to



this and adjoining counties a little later; some of them came to this county and some to Crawford County, none closely related to our family but none closer than cousins, mostly second cousins.

My grandfather had one brother four or five years older. His name was Granville B. Shannon. About the time or a year or two after Grandpa married, Uncle Granville made a trip to Fort Smith. He ran onto a man selling improved apple trees. Up to this time they had nothing but seedling apples, so Uncle Granville bought some of these grafted apple trees. Among the trees Uncle Granville bought was a bunch of trees

that the labels were lost, so the man gave some of these unnamed trees. Uncle Granville gave them to granddad who planted on a piece of red pawpaw land that seemed to be especially adapted to these large yellow apples. The skin of this apple when ripe looked and felt like they had been greased. They ripened late in fall. Only objection was they were shy bearers. But their wonderful aroma made them a distinctive variety of apples. Their fine looks and wonderful aroma made them a very desirable apple but their shy bearing tendency kept apple growers from planting any great acreage of them.

Another distinctive feature of this apple was its decided preference for red pawpaw land to grow in. Grown in other types of soil they seem to lose their glossy appearance and much of their rich aroma.

Grandfather used to haul part of his apple crop to Texas, always taking the Shannon Pippin, for when he would stop in a town to try to sell his apples, the aroma of the Shannons simply drew people to his wagon and he always sold them for 5¢ each, selling them as fast as he could hand them out. And they helped sell many bushels of other varieties.

No one knew the name of this apple and locally it was called the Shannon Pippin because grandpa Shannon was the man who had the original trees. The American Pomological Society investigated this apple, some claiming it was identical to the Rhode Island Greening. But after a searching investigation the Society decided it was not a Greening but was a new variety and accepted the name Shannon Pippin. My grandfather always filled his cellar with apples to be sold through the winter or sold or traded for other things they needed. He usually had more apples than the cellar would hold, so they built a pen of rails in the orchards where they would pile the hard varieties, cover first with straw and corn stalks, then cover them with dirt, then laid planks over the pen to keep them dry. So these apples were the last used, generally in late spring.

I can remember well when deer and wild turkeys were plentiful and all kinds of game was plentiful. Deer and wild turkeys came into the fields frequently and grazed, and there were two species of game that was abundant, one of which is now extinct and the other is becoming almost extinct -- the wild pigeons and the Prairie Chickens. As a farm boy I have seen flights of the passenger pigeon that would darken the sky for almost an hour at a time. In fact there was a cloud of pigeons as far as you could see in every direction. We lived about 18 or 20 miles from what was then called the pigeon roost, and they had piled up on the timber where they roosted until the limbs were nearly all



broken off and there were no limbs left on lots of the trees. Men visited this roost with torches and clubs and killed thousands of the birds which when dressed made a wonderful bird pie. In a few years these pigeons all disappeared. They are extinct -- not one left in all the world. There were millions of them when I was a boy. It doesn't seem possible that they could become extinct in one man's lifetime.

When I was a boy growing up, every fall and winter there were large coveys of Prairie Chickens and many feasts we had of baked stuffed Prairie Chicken. They came over into our section from the prairie sections of what is now Oklahoma and southwestern Kansas. I have seen flocks of 10 to 25 Prairie Chickens in the stalk fields on our farm. They really got fat on the scattered corn left from gathering. The last of these birds I ever saw in this county was one lone Prairie hen which I killed and my wife dressed and stuffed and baked for a Thanksgiving dinner a year or two after I married. Thus, in a ten year period the Passenger Pigeon became extinct and the Prairie Chicken almost extinct. In fact, the Prairie Chicken is extinct in some sections where it was plentiful 50 years ago.

The wild turkey is another bird to be found in large flocks all over the Ozarks when I was a boy, but is now very scarce. Very few of the boys now growing up will ever experience the thrill of killing a wild turkey. I will always remember the thrill I experienced when I killed my first wild turkey.

A cousin visiting our home one day made my father promise to let me visit his home. He told my father he would promise that he would help me kill a wild turkey. He told my dad to let me come when the moon got where it was coming up about an hour before daybreak. So one evening father told me to get ready and go to Cousin Mark's that evening. So I went down to see my grandfather Shannon and borrowed a single-barreled muzzle-loading shot-gun to take with me for the kill. I started early and reached his place long before sundown. He showed me where to put my horse and feed him and about 30 minutes before sundown we started to go up on the mountain at a place they called Hackberry Point. We got pretty high on the Point by sundown and secreted ourselves in an old tree-top and in 10 or 15 minutes he punched me and pointed up the hill. There appeared what seemed to me the largest bunch of Wild Turkeys I ever saw. They were walking round and round what looked to me like the largest Hackberry tree I ever saw. In a few minutes one turkey flew up into this big tree and in just a few minutes it looked like the top of that tree was full of turkeys. When they had settled down it was beginning to get dark.

We slipped away and went back to his house where he said "Better get to bed soon as possible "And about moon-rising time we will get up and go to the turkey roost". I was so thrilled at what I had seen and the chance I was going to have to get to kill my first Wild Turkey that it was some time before I could go to sleep. It seemed like I had not slept more than an hour when he came upstairs to my bed and woke me up and said it was time to get up and get ready to go to the woods for our kill. He carefully loaded my gun and in 30 minutes we were on the mountain by a large tree near the one we had watched the turkeys go to roost in. There was just one turkey in the tree. He pointed it out to me and whispered that something had scared the turkeys and scattered



them. He whispered instructions as how to aim my gun. By this time the lone turkey was disturbed and I could see it stretching its neck and hear it say putt-putt. He whispered "Shoot", so I pulled the trigger and at the crack of my gun it flew away. It seemed to me it was raining leaves, but as there were no leaves on the tree I realized that it was feathers that were falling. He found one clump of three feathers he said came from the breast of the turkey, so he said "You killed it and we will find it in the morning".

He said "We will go up on the hill and see if we can run into some of them. There were a number of hard maple trees along the bluff. They had not shed their leaves. All other trees were bare. Every few minutes two or three turkeys would fly out of one of these maple trees. The leaves were so thick and it was so dark that we couldn't see the turkeys in time to get a shot before they were flying. In a little while day began to break and he said "We will go down under the bluff and I will try to call a turkey up so you can kill it". So we found a place where we could get down the bluff and he had me stationed behind a large rock, had me take his gun which was heavier than my grandfather's, and he said it was a harder-shooting gun too. He had a turkey caller made from the small wing-bone of a turkey. He could make a call that sounded exactly like the hen turkey's call. An instant after he first called, a gobbler not over a hundred yards away gobbled and we could hear him strut. He called again and the wild turkey gobbled again much closer, so he called again and I am sure it wasn't a minute till the wild gobbler gobbled again just a few steps away and a minute later he walked into the sights of my gun. I pulled the trigger and at the report of the gun the turkey dropped. I laid the gun down and ran and jumped on the turkey and began to holler "I've got him, I've got him". This sure tickled my cousin and he was almost as happy as I was.

He said "Let's go on a little farther and see if we can't get another one" but I said "No, this one is enough for me and if we can find the one I shot out of the tree, I'll let you have one of them". So we went back to the house. On the way we looked for the first turkey I had shot out of the tree. I fed my horse and ate breakfast. I could hardly wait to get started home. I weighed my turkey. It weighed 24 pounds or 4 pounds more than one my cousin George Greer had killed a few days before. I tied my turkey on my saddle so everyone could see I had one and took particular pains to see that everybody along the road home saw it. I wouldn't have swapped shoes with a king. A few days later Cousin Mark found the first one I had shot, lying by the side of a big log where it had fallen.

The next summer late, my brother and I were squirrel hunting on the mountain back of our place. We went to a spring in an old orchard to get a drink. In the mud below the spring we found turkey tracks. There were hundreds of tracks, as this was the only water in more than a mile. We decided this was where they watered, so we went home to get corn, came back, and scattered it around the spring. The next day we went back, found the corn was all gone, so we knew there must be quite a flock of them.

This spring was near an old house place and was fenced in to protect some pear trees, so we were sure it was turkeys eating the corn. We scattered more corn and next day went back earlier and found they had



not eaten the corn, so decided we would hide near the spring and watch for them. So I placed my brother where I knew he could kill a turkey and hid myself. I told him if they came in that way, I would count three in a loud whisper and he was to shoot when I said "three". And I would do the same. In just a few minutes we heard the turkeys coming. Soon they came in sight, much closer than I thought they would, so I counted three and about the time I said "three", they began to fly. I shot and killed one and he just stood and watched them all fly away.

He was as mad as he could be. He said that I shot too quick. I reminded him that I waited till they were flying before I shot. So I told him I believed they had flown up on top of the hill into a stubble field, so we might get another shot. So we slipped up the hill and just out in the edge of timber I climbed up in a tree to see if I could see any of them. Sure enough, I could see 8 or 10 feeding around in the stubble and every few minutes the mother bird would call, not the loud call they usually made but a low subdued call that they make when they are frightened. So I told him he could have the double-barrelled shotgun which would give him two chances to get a turkey, and I would use the single-barrelled gun of my grandfather's.

There had been oats on the ground and there was a rank growth of rag weeds on the ground, so we got right close to the turkeys before they flew up. He fired into them on the wing. So did I and one of us -- we never knew which -- broke one's wing. Instead of shooting the other barrel at the crippled turkey, he dropped his gun and ran up to get the turkey. Just as he stopped to pick it up, it got on its feet and started to run. Every few feet it would step on its broken wing and he would almost get hold of it when it would start running again. Three or four times it looked as if he was going to pick it up. Finally after running it clear across the field, it ran into a thicket and got out of sight and he lost it. So he never got to experience the thrill of getting his first wild turkey.

We lived right on the line of Arkansas and the Indian Territory (Cherokee Nation). Just across the line from our farm there was a large forest, thousands of acres. One spring I was crippled up with rheumatism and Bob Worsham, a neighbor boy had a bad lingering cough away down in the Lees Creek hills about 40 miles from where we lived. In the Indian Territory there was a mineral spring, the waters of which had a great reputation for healing various diseases.

Bob's father and mine conceived the idea that a stay of a few weeks at these springs, drinking the water and using it for bathing, might help us or cure us. So they loaded bedding and food for a month's stay. They furnished us with guns, both rifles and shotguns, and plenty of ammunition, and pots and pans to cook our food in. We went to this spring which was called Hood's Spring. There was a log cabin occupied by a half-breed Cherokee and his wife. They had a small field which they cultivated. I don't think there was another house in 10 or 15 miles.

They had taken the saddles with them and left the wagon, in which we had a good bed. The wagon was equipped with bows and a good wagon cover. The Indian and his wife could both talk English, but were rarely at home. Every few days, several Indians, most of them full-bloods,



would visit these springs and fill bottles and jugs with water. Many times they would scrape up the mud from the bed of the spring branch and take that too. They said the mud would heal the most obstinate old sore. They probably could talk English, as they understood what we would say but would say "Me no talk inglis". These were all the people we saw during the five weeks we were there.

Squirrels and wild turkeys were abundant and quite a few deer and some wolves, lots of wild hogs, and down on a small creek about a mile from our camp I ran into a bunch of wild Indian ponies one day. We had plenty of food but most of our meat was squirrels and the breast of wild turkey broiled on the fire. About a mile north of our camp I found a place where deer came and licked the ground for salt. I noticed a place where the ground was white with a substance which resembled salt. I tasted it and it had a salty brackish flavor, so I decided it was what was commonly known as a salt lick. I went back the next day and put out some salt and next time I was out there, the deer had simply torn up the ground, fighting over the salt.

It was no trouble to kill a turkey. It was mating time for wild turkeys, so I had a turkey caller made by my cousin, who helped me kill my first wild turkey. The caller was made out of the small bone from a turkey's wing. I had practiced calling turkeys on it till my cousin said I was almost perfect. We would get up at daybreak, make a pot of coffee and fry some bacon or squirrel or turkey steak, eat breakfast and go out a mile from camp and find a large tree and fix a good seat on the side we expected the turkey would come from. Usually, I'd find a suitable tree and call once or twice and a gobbler down in the hollow or across on the other side would gobble. Then I'd fix my seat as quick as I could before calling. If the gobbler happened to be a young one, it usually didn't take more than 15 or 20 minutes till he would be close enough for a shot.

However, if it was an old gobbler, he didn't come in such a hurry. When you would call, he would gobble and then if he wasn't too far away you could hear him strutting. He would strut back and forth. Then when you called again he would run towards you a few steps, gobble and strut back and forth. Then at your call again, he would run and gobble and strut. Sometimes it would take a full half-hour to get him close enough for a shot. Sometimes he would come near enough so you could see him perhaps 150 or 200 yards away and you'd call and he would gobble and strut but would come no closer. If you ever moved so that any part of your body wasn't squarely in front of the tree, he would see you and rise and fly away.

Sometimes two of them would hear your call and as a rule you would always be able to get one of them. You couldn't hide behind a tree, rock or log and call one up, peeping out to watch. He would invariably see you before he got close enough to shoot. Sometimes he would fly and light in a tree, always a stooping tree. I can't remember how many turkeys we killed in the five weeks but never more than we could eat. If we got two in one morning, we would give one to the Indians at the spring.

I had one exciting experience one morning trying to call a turkey. On Friday evening my father and his, and one of our uncles, came to



see how we were making it, and hunting some. On Friday night we had all gone out to our salt lick to try to kill a deer. We all climbed up into trees to watch for the deer to come in so we could get a shot. My father was fat and heavy and the only tree he could climb was small post-oak, the limbs of which came nearly to the ground. So we helped him get up and handed him his gun, an old double-barrelled muzzle-loading shotgun that he had killed many deer and wild turkeys with.

We waited a long time. Finally a nice deer came in, passed almost under me in the tree I had climbed. It made so little noise that even I didn't see it until it was almost directly under the tree my father sat in. It stopped in the shadow of the tree and seemed to me ages before anyone but me saw it. My father discovered it. I had been trying to get a bead with the rifle I had. Father was trying to get in position so he could shoot. It wasn't more than 30 feet from him but on account of the limbs in his tree it was hard to get in position to shoot and keep from falling. But almost as he had a position, someone slapped a mosquito on his hand, making so much noise that the deer just made three or four jumps and was out of sight. So we called it a night and went to camp. Next morning we ate breakfast by lantern light and lit out to try to get a wild turkey. Mr. Worsham and I went one way; Bob, my father and uncle, another direction. We were in high spirits. I knew we would get two or three turkeys.

I got my position and waited about ten minutes for Mr. Worsham to get settled. I made a call and got a reply right straight, but it must have been a wise old bird, for he was slow. I'd call and he would come a little way and stop and strut and gobble. It was open woods and the dead grass was about knee-high. I'd call again and it would come a little ways and stop and strut and gobble. It did this four or five times when I happened to notice the grass shaking about 40 or 50 feet from where I sat. I watched and the grass seemed to part, so I raised up on my knees and could see it was some kind of an animal. It seemed to me it had the biggest yellowest eyes I'd ever looked at. I was scared and forgot all about the old gobbler. I drew a hasty aim and shot. My gun sounded like a cannon. The animal jumped up and started bounding down the hill. I shot it again and it dropped, apparently stone-dead. I went down and found I had shot the largest Bobcat I had ever seen. So I dragged it up to the tree where I had sat calling, and started on around the mountainside and met Mr. Worsham coming in. He thought I'd killed a deer. So when we got back to where I'd left my Bobcat, he was up and leaving. So it took a third shot to finish it.

Mr. Worsham said "We'll fool the boys". So we cut a pole and got some bark and tied its feet together and swung it on the pole and went to camp carrying it on the pole between us. Sure enough, they saw us coming and Uncle Jeff said "By Jove, they have a young deer". We had a big laugh. We decided the Bobcat heard my call and thought it was a turkey hen he was stalking for a big turkey breakfast. But you can bet I could feel my hat raise up. I think my hair stood end and I am sure I had a buck ague. I don't think I ever was worse scared, at least for a little while.

A few days before, I saw a large timber wolf. I was sitting down by a large tree on a place they said deer used for a crossing from one range to another, when I saw this wolf coming along the little trail.



At first I thought it was a large dog. It came to about 200 yards from me when it sat down on its haunches. It seemed to me it sat there an hour and if it moved I couldn't tell it. But it just sat. So finally I knew I couldn't hurt it bad for I had the shotgun loaded with turkey shot. I was sure I could put a few shot in it and give it a scare. But while I sat studying what to do, it came 25 or 30 steps closer. It sat down again, so I took a good aim as I could, for I was a little shaky. At the crack of my gun it must have jumped 15 or 20 feet and I've never seen anything run as fast, for I gave it the second barrel at about the second jump.

On that trip we had several scary experiences with snakes. We killed three very large rattlesnakes, diamond-backs. Then I had a good laugh at Bob. One day we were eating service berries. I was in the tree and Bob was lying on a big flat rock when I saw a blue racer crawl up on the rock at his feet. It raised its head about 18 inches and stood licking its tongue. I said "Bob, there's a snake at your feet". He raised up and let out a yell like a Comanche Indian. The snake disappeared and I laughed till I nearly fell out of the tree.

Just west of us there was a large forest. It must have been about four miles to the nearest farm. There were no wild turkeys in this forest but it was great for other game and for squirrels and deer. For some reason no wild turkeys ranged in these flint hills. My father loved to hunt and fish, and mother didn't like him to hunt and fish much, but he went hunting and fishing every opportunity he had.

One fall day it was raining off and on, so mother lay down and dropped off to sleep. I was 5 or 6 and there was a sister two years younger and a brother about a year old. So dad told me he was going down in the woods and see if he could get a deer, and for me to stay about the house. Sister, mother and baby brother were all asleep, so I lay down on the pallet and soon I was asleep too. I don't know how long I slept but I waked up. Lying on the pallet everything seemed so still one could hear a pin drop.

Directly I heard the faint report of a gun. In a little while Dad came in very quietly and put his gun in the closet where he kept it, and went out. I followed him to the barn where he was catching the old black mare -- her name was Puss. He caught her and put harness on her and hitched her to a sled he kept to haul things around the barn lot. He said "I killed some deer down in the woods. You can go with me if you will be a good boy". He always added that stipulation.

He had not gone over a half or a quarter of a mile where a dry branch ran along the foot of a little short hill, I guess not over 20 steps from bottom to top. He said he had a hunch that an old buck and doe which had been seen on the flat several times that summer would be close to the top of this short hill. So he was as quiet as he could be and crept up the hill. As soon as he could see over the top, he saw the old buck standing broadside and the doe and two young deer lying down. He pulled down on the old buck, shot him, as the doe and two young deer jumped up and started running. So he shot the other load at the one he thought was the young buck, wounded it pretty bad. So he re-loaded his gun after he cut the old buck's throat. He followed the wounded one about a quarter mile farther on. The wounded deer jumped



up and he shot and killed it. So he came back for the old mare to drag them in. So he had the two deer back home and the old one about half skinned before mother waked up. That was one time he went hunting that Mother was about as happy over as he was.

The woods were full of squirrels and the creeks were full of fish, and one could go squirrel hunting or fishing most any time and come home with all they wanted.

People were not as selfish then as they are now. The winter months was the time when the men cleared new land for the plow. They would cut most of the timber, make rails to fence the ground, and would have log rollings and call in the neighbors to help roll and pile the logs in large piles so they could be burned. Many times they would have a rail splitting, when the neighbors would come in and help. They paired off in couples to split rails and there would be a prize to the couple who could split the most rails. Usually when the men were log rolling or splitting rails, the women would have a quilting and a big dinner to which all contributed. If a man got sick, the neighbors would gather in and cut and haul his winter's wood and if he became sick in crop time and unable to work, they would work his crop out, or harvest his crop as the case might be.

Boys' play was quite different then. The boys had stick horses, wooden pistols and guns, and played Wild West, sheriff and robbers, carried mail, and things like that. When I was a boy 15 or 16 years old, I played at riding stick horses and with wooden guns or pistols. They were common. But I haven't seen even a small boy riding stick horses and playing cowboy and Wild West with stick horses. Nor does one see girls 10 to 15 years of age playing with dolls or playing with dishes, keeping house. You just don't see it.

Back to earlier days. As a boy I was the oldest child in our family. My father was born in 1846. Slavery was in vogue. When he was 15, the Civil War broke out. He was the youngest of eight brothers and had never been trained to do any kind of work. He worked when he wanted to and played when he wished. So when his father was killed during the war and all his brothers but one died. When the Civil War ended he was 19 years old and when he came home from the army he had one horse.

The farm which had not been worked much for five years had grown up and it was almost starting all over again. He was greatly handicapped for he had little or no training. He had never learned to do many of the simple jobs of work done on the farm. He couldn't use a grain scythe, the implement used to harvest most of their grain. He had never learned to sow grain broadcast by hand. So he told me he wanted me to learn to do every job there was to do on the farm. So early he had a single stock plow built for me. At that time even a double shovel was unknown. When I learned to plow with a single stock we ran five furrows to each middle, so five or ten acres was a pretty big corn field. The wheat and oats were harvested by hand with a scything cradle. He couldn't cradle, so he had me learn to use one. Then the double shovel came into use. He bought one and had one cut down to fit my size. Then when cultivators came in, he bought one and I learned to use it too. Then he bought a mower to cut our meadow, then a reaper. They called it a dropper -- gave four men plenty to do to bind the grain as fast



as he could cut it. Then the next was a binder. He didn't milk but always said that milking was a man's job. So as soon as I got large enough to tie and pull the calves off, it was my job to go with my mother to care for the cows and calves.

He was a progressive man and as a farmer he always held to the idea of building up the soil, by rotation of crops, growing legumes, and plowing all the residues he could into the soil. So when he died in December 1887, he left our land in better shape than it was when he took charge of it after the Civil War. He farmed from necessity. It was all he had had experience in doing. The war deprived him of an education. He was 14 when the war closed the schools and 19 when it ended and left them impoverished and without education or helpful experience. He wanted me to have an education so I would not have to slave (as he called it) on the farm.

When he was so suddenly taken from us in 1887, I was 20 years of age and poorly equipped to step out into the lead. My father and mother were both very liberal spenders and poor savers, so I had not learned the necessity for saving, as I had already passed the formative period of life. I have always felt that handicap and passed my failure on to my children, failing to impress upon them the value of time and money.

But my parents were Godly-minded and early they began to instill a love of the Master and service to Him and to my fellowman. My parents, since my earliest recollection, by both precept and example trained us to regard our duty to God and to our fellowman, so I owe much to them. For years after the Civil War we had poor school facilities. The average school term was three months. My father was an inveterate reader and instilled in me a love for reading good books and magazines, so by persevering habits of reading I have acquired a reasonably fair education which has helped me to be a better citizen and able to be of service to my country.

My father was always in the front in service to the community. In Sunday School, church, singing schools and regular day schools, he was always a leader in everything for the betterment of the community. His service was always given freely, without reservation and without any thought of remuneration. Many times in addition to his personal services he gave of his means without any thought on his part of ever receiving any personal benefits. Many times his service rendered to the community meant considerable loss to him but I never heard him complain and he never failed or refused a service asked of him, no matter how much it inconvenienced him. It is with no little degree of pride that I look back to these services and sacrifices he made for the community good.

I have tried to be worthy of his life of service and to emulate his most worthy examples. I hope I have at least in some small measure been able to pass some of his splendid examples of Christian love and fortitude to my own children. My father, while a staunch Baptist in faith and belief and practice, was always tolerant of the other man's viewpoint. At old Vineyard where the Missionary Baptists had a church, Methodists and Presbyterians often preached and sometimes held revival meetings. My father always joined in and led the song service. I remember these things vividly for I was converted at a revival meeting



conducted by a North Methodist preacher named James Farley. There were only two families of his faith in our community and the revival he held at which I was converted resulted in a dozen or more conversions and eight or ten additions to the Baptist church at Vineyard. My father faithfully conducted the song service at every revival held at old Vineyard Church during his life-time.

Back to boyhood days and some of the high lights and low lights of those days. As a child for some reason I was terribly afraid of Negroes and full-blood Indians. One of the laughable things that happened was a trip with my Dad to a sawmill for lumber to build a new barn. My father and a neighbor who was also building a barn went to a sawmill 10 miles west of us on Evansville Creek. This mill was water-powered and they had a dam in the creek and impounded water enough to run the saw some 4 or 5 hours at a stretch and the owner a half-breed Indian named Wright.

When we got to the mill, father and the neighbor were loading the lumber. I got to snooping around to see what the thing looked like. I went around the mill. There were 25 or 30 full-blood Indians shooting fish with bow and arrows and some gigging them with gigs. They were all perfectly nude except they wore breech-clouts. My first thought was Wild Indians and that we would all be murdered and scalped.

So I ran for life, back to where Dad and the neighbor were loading lumber and said "Dad, let's get away from here quick". He said "Why, Bennie, what's the matter?" I said "There's a big bunch of Wild Indians around there and if we don't get away before they see us we will all be killed." Mr. Wright fell over on the sawdust pile convulsed with laughter and the neighbor laughed like he would split his sides. But I was scared and it took some time before they could pacify me, for I had heard so many tales of Indian savagery and my grandfather Greer was murdered and scalped by the Pin Indians during the war.

Another time I got a scare of Indians. My uncle John McKinney lived on Evansville Creek and we went there visiting often. So one Saturday uncle's boys came to see us and stayed till the next Saturday, when we went home with them to stay till the next week. As well as I can remember, it was in August and the creek was low, barely running over the shoals. We had to travel up the creek about two miles, crossing it several times where we came to the creek bottom. There was several acres of thickly timbered bottom where a scrubby bush called Buckeye grew very thick. The Indians dug the roots of this bush and peeled the bark which they used to stupefy fish by damming a big long hole of water. Going up to the upper end of the hole of water, they beat the bark to a pulp and put it in the water and it stupefied the fish so they floated to the surface and they took the fish out and had a big fish fry.

There was a big crowd of Indians back in this thicket of Buckeye, digging the roots. It was hot and the Indians had stripped themselves of everything except their breech-clouts. There were 50 or 60 of them. All of them had horses tied up in the bottom and some of them had evidently been taking their horses to water and we had passed by them, not seeing them as they came back. Some of the young bucks came back up the road galloping their horses and let out a few yells. It scared



us and we darted into a thick bunch of bushes and hid till they got by. When they passed; of course they went into the woods and tied up their horses and had evidently not seen us. But we were scared and we got away from there just as fast as we possibly could. We ran the two miles to Uncle John's place and were about out of breath when we got there. Uncle John had been to the mill and had seen the Indians and knew what they were doing and it sure tickled him. But it was a real tragedy to us. We would stop and listen a minute and imagined we could hear them coming. Worse scared than ever, we would run another stretch. After we got over our scare it was funny, but it was a real tragedy while we were running that two miles.

Another great kick of boyhood was every spring when they made maple syrup and sugar at Grandfather's. They had a lot of large hard maple trees that they called the sugar orchard. These trees were tapped in February after hard freezing weather was over. They would bore a hole in the tree, usually with a 1-inch bit, and cut a notch into the edge of the hole on each side. Then would cut joints of alder about 6 inches long and push the pith out and insert in the hole to catch the sap, hanging a tin bucket to catch the sap. The buckets were emptied twice a day, morning and night. They had a sled and a couple of barrels to hold the sap. Most of the time it was hauled in on the sled, pulled by an old gentle ox.

At the little log cabin they had built a chimney and a wide fireplace that would take two large iron kettles hung on a heavy iron rack which enabled them to swing the kettle around off the fire when the sap had boiled sufficiently to make syrup or sugar as the case might be. At the back end of the cabin two bunks were built in, so if it was necessary, whoever was boiling sap could stay all night. If the weather was freezing cold and they boiled the sap down at night so it would not freeze before it was boiled. Freezing before it was boiled weakened the sap, so it required more sap to make a gallon. It took 40 gallons of sap to make a gallon of sugar; not quite as much to make a gallon of syrup. Grandfather usually made a barrel of syrup and about 100 pounds of sugar.

A trip to grandfather's during maple syrup and sugar making time was always a high spot in my boyhood days. I sure enjoyed riding the sled pulled by the old ox. I think his name was Spike. Sometimes old Spike would get contrary and when he did it took Granddad to straighten him out. Sometimes he would turn the sled over and spill a whole barrel of sap. That meant the loss of about two dollars, so Granddad would take it out of old Spike's hide.

As a boy living out on a farm many miles from a town of any size, boys didn't have much chance to make money. Maybe he would trap a few wild animals and have a few furs to sell — skunk, possum, coon or fox, which 60 years ago were not as valuable as they are now, but were worth 10 or 12 dollars, which was highly prized, as it usually meant a suit of clothes for the next year.

One of the high spots was my first store-bought suit of clothes and they were second-hand. George Greer, one of my cousins 6 months older than I, bought a suit for Sunday. He wore it one winter and by fall it was too small, so Uncle Tom told Dad that if I could wear it, he could



have it for \$3.50. As it was a little large for me, I was able to wear them out and was I proud of them -- my first long legs. Before this, all my clothes were home-spun, home-wove, and home-made. They were not as pretty to look at but warm and comfortable and you couldn't wear them out. The first woolen pants I ever had were made from wool sheared off of our sheep. We picked the burrs and trash out of wool by hand, washed the wool and took it to a carding machine which made it into rolls. My mother spun the rolls into yarn which she wove into jeans which was colored a rich brown color with walnut hulls. They were sure warm and nice, but my, how scratchy they were. Mother made me a suit I wore till I out grewed it. Then my brother fell heir to the suit and finally one of my cousins wore it out. I was well into my teens when I got my first store suit.

We had one pair of shoes a year--put them on in fall and they had to do till time to go barefooted. They usually had copper toe caps to keep me from kicking holes in the toes. Then one fall instead of shoes I got a pair of red topped boots, and you can tell the world I stepped high, wide and handsome when I got them on.

Christmas time was always a red letter time. The day we looked for from one Christmas till the next seemed a mighty long time from one till the next. I think I was about 10 years old when I saw my first Christmas tree, and I can't tell you how the sight of that tree trimmed as it was with the candles all over it and the tinsel trimmings. It was up to that time the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. And that night at the tree when Santa came in with his red clothes and long white whiskers throwing candy right and left from a big bundle never in this wide world had anything so thrilling happened to me. He came by me and said, "Boy, have you been good". I said, "Yes Sir". He said "Hold out your hands", and filled them heaping full of candy. I got a Barlow Knife and a French Harp. I sure went home a happy boy. It was a real red letter day for a country boy, his sister and brother. Oh, yes, two packets of fire crackers too, something I had never seen before.

There is another incident of my boyhood that will always stand out and never be forgotten. My first pipe smoke, a real pipe and real tobacco. A pipe my father had smoked till it was good and strong and a few whiffs at the pipe without any tobacco would have been sufficient to floor many seasoned smokers.

During the week my dad had told me that if I would work good that week we would go up on the mountain Saturday evening and see if we could hear turkeys go to roost. So I worked all week like a Turk so I could get to have a chance to kill a turkey. This flock of wild turkeys had raised there that summer and were just about full grown for I had seen them several times when I had seen them several times when on the mountain squirrel hunting. I had first seen them when they were a little larger than quails and three or four times in the late summer and fall. And at this time just before Thanksgiving we were planning to get one out of the flock for our Thanksgiving dinner.

So I worked like a good fellow and felt pretty big so I decided I'd celebrate ahead of time. My father smoked a pipe. Usually it was a cob pipe. My grandfather Shannon was living with us at that time and he



always had a box of homespun tobacco as he chewed tobacco, and always chewed tobacco he had raised himself, and he would never chew it till it was two years old or older. So I smoked a twist of his tobacco and some matches and one of Dad's old pipes. So about an hour and a half before sundown we got ready and started. It was about two miles to the place we hoped to hear them go to roost. We went through our field and at least a half hour before sundown we were where we thought we would be near enough to hear them fly up to roost. For when it was still and the wind was right one could hear them flying up into the trees. So father left me at the south end of an old field, and he went on to the north side of this old field, for it was on a steep hillside of heavy timber back of this old field when in squirrel hunting I had seen the turkey droppings where they had roosted.

As soon as I thought dad was far enough away --he couldn't smell tobacco smoke--I filled the old cob and proceeded to smoke. I smoked one pipe full and had filled the pipe for another smoke but I began to feel a little dizzy and put the tobacco out and the pipe away. About good dusk dad came back and asked me if I had heard any turkeys. Of course I said no. He said, "Well, we're out of luck. They must have been scared and crossed over to the other side of the mountains". So we struck out for home. By that time I was sure getting sick, so sick it was hard to keep up with dad and I was stumbling along behind him when he asked me, "What's the matter with you? Are you sick?" I told him no, but I didn't feel good. It sure seemed to me like I was going to die. I was so sick I could hardly walk, and I was greatly relieved when we got home to find Uncle Mack Shannon and his folks had come to spend the night. So I slipped out back of the house where there was a big pile of rails under a large persimmon tree. I climbed up on the pile of rails and lay down to die, for I just knew I was going to die.

Finally when I heard them go out to supper I slipped in the house and upstairs and lay down on the bed. I just didn't see how I could help but die. Oh! I was so sick. After supper they missed me and began to call. I heard father say "He must be sick; he was so draggy coming back from the mountain; I had to wait for him a time or two." He asked if they had looked up there, so mother came up and of course I was sound asleep.

She waked me up and said "Why didn't you come to supper?" I said, "I didn't feel good; I was sick." She said "Yes, I told you you was eating too much pie at dinner." So she made me undress and get in bed, and went downstairs. Directly she came back with a glassful of salt water which she made me take. In a few minutes I was trying to fill the slop jar. My, I was sick, but after I had vomited, everything in my stomach up, I felt better and went to sleep. I decided I would never try smoking again but I did and didn't get very sick, for I had made Dad some cob pipes and one I kept hid away for my own use. But I'll never be any sicker than I was for two or three hours that night.

I had another tragic experience that I'll never forget. When a boy we had no tame blackberries but depended on the wild blackberries for berries to can. The wild berries grew and produced wonderful crops. We had gone to a wild berry patch and picked several gallons, which Mother intended to can. On the way home she remembered that she was out of sealing wax. That was before the time of glass jar, and we



canned all our fruit in tin cans and sealed them with a wax made of parafine and brick dust.

They decided I could go through a cornfield to my uncle's store for sealing wax. I got over the fence, an old-fashioned rail-worm fence. I had gone about 20 or 30 steps when I saw a blue racer snake coming up the corn middle, its head up about a foot and its black forked tongue darting in and out. I had heard some tall yarns about blue racers running people and striking them with tail, so lit down through the corn just as fast as I could run. I'd look back and here came the snake, so I'd light out again. Finally I reached the other side of the field and jumped up on the fence. The snake ran into the weeds in the fence corner, so I climbed along the fence till I got up to our cross fence and the road to and from the field. I looked and looked but could see no trace of the snake, so I fixed myself for a leap out into the road and ran down the road as fast as I could for about a hundred yards. On looking back I could see no sign of the snake, so cut my pace to a dogtrot till I got out into the highway. When I got to the store and told my uncle, he sure had a big laugh and said if I had stopped, the snake would have stopped too. But I couldn't have stopped, no matter how badly I wanted to.

When I was about 15 years old I wanted to go to work for a friend of father's on a farm. He paid \$15 per month. I worked two weeks when my employer said if I wasn't afraid to ride a mule I could go home Saturday eve and come back Monday morning to work. I saddled the mule and started home. Got about a quarter down the road when the mule got contrary and decided he wouldn't go any further down that road, so in trying to force him to go, he reared up and fell over backward. I slid out of the saddle to keep him from falling on me but he rolled over on me and broke my collar-bone, so I was laid up three weeks and it took all I had made to pay my doctor bill.

Another time, in getting our winter wood, I cut my foot very badly. The doctor took seven stitches to sew it up. Sure did hurt. Cut my foot nearly half off and it didn't bleed a drop; there was snow on the ground and my foot was very cold and strange to say the wound never suppurated a drop, except where the stitches were.

One winter when I was 17, I clerked in a store for Will Butler of Prairie Grove, but didn't like it, so went home about the middle of January and never went back.

Will Butler told me his father lived on our place when I was born and he was about 10 years old. He said my father came down to their place one morning all excited. His father asked my father what he wanted and father said, "I want to borrow your scales; I have a fine boy at my house." He said after a while his mother went up to fathers' and when she came back she said "Jim's boy weighs 10 pounds; he sure is a big baby."

That event happened 74 years ago this morning, as I write this. Lots of water has gone under the bridge since that morning 74 years ago.



Glen asked me once if I had ever been in anyone's melon patch. I can truly say I never went into anyone's melon patch to steal a melon. But I have seen some funny things happen in connection with swiping melons. Once a bunch of us boys went to the old swimming hole. One of the neighbors had a field of corn along side the creek and out in the middle of the field he had a melon patch. Brother Walter and Harry Denton slipped off to this melon patch. There was a big old apple tree just at the edge of the melon patch. They each got a melon and went out under the apple tree to eat their melon. They cut them open when all at once the man dropped down out of the apple tree right between them and said, "Are they good, boys." They sure were beat. He made them pay for the melons, but told them that when they wanted a melon and would come and tell him, he would give them all they could eat.

Another time one of my cousins had a nice patch and boys had been stealing his melons. One boy in the community was the leader. Some of the boys made it up with my cousin to break him. Cousin was to watch and when they all had a melon, he was to shoot his shotgun. One of the boys was to hollow he was shot and tell the other boys to get away. This boy they were playing the trick on lived clear out on top of the mountain. So when they had their melons, he commenced shooting. And one of the boys said, "Oh, boys, I'm shot. Get away if you can." So this boy sure ran. The man shot over his head a time or two and that made him run that much faster. He ran all the way home and was clear out of breath when he got there. They kept quiet as long as they could, but it sure broke him of going in people's melon patches.

The boys that lived around old Greersburg and the boys who lived around Evansville feuded a lot and we had one or two big pawpaw fights. There was a place in the Evansville Creek where the whole creek bed was slate. About 75 feet wide and 150 yards long was slate rock bottom. Pawpaws grew in profusion in the creek bottom. We would gather eight or ten bushels of ripe soft pawpaws. Each side would choose a captain and we would pile our ripe pawpaws at each end of the slate creek bed strip, pull off our clothes, and have a battle with the soft ripe pawpaws. When it was over, we would all be plastered from head to foot with the soft pawpaws. We sure were a sight. Then we went to the swimming hole and washed up.

One time a bunch of Turks came through the country, begging, horse trading, and having their bears wrestle for money. They camped in the creek bottom. That night a rain that was almost a water spout fell up the creek. The water came down in a head wall and drowned two women and their children, and drowned their bears. In the search for the bodies we found a bag with nearly two thousand dollars in cash belonging to one of the Turks. They claimed there was another bag of money lost.

There was one little bag saved and the men came back every year for two or three years and hunted up and down the creek. It was thought some one among the searchers found this money though no one knew it



but the one who found it if it was found. They had a local stone mason build a nice stone wall around the graves of their women and children.

For many years Evansville had saloons and being just over the line from the Indian Territory, it became a tough place. The gamblers and thugs congregated there and nearly every morning the dead body of some Indian or transient white man would be found. A group of gamblers and race horse men made it a rendezvous. They were reputed to be ex-members of the Quantrell Band and James boys (Frank and Jesse), noted bank and railway robbers.

One of Uncle Granville Shannon's boys rode one of his mother's horses to town one day and got into a card game with one of this gang named Fisher. They won the horse from him, but let him have the horse to ride home on his promise to bring it back the next day. But when his mother, Aunt Unity Shannon, found out next morning that he had lost the horse to Fisher in a card game and was going to deliver the horse, she put her foot down and wouldn't let him have the horse to take to Evansville to deliver to Fisher. Her son, Maurice, was a minor and she refused to consider it a debt of honor as her son claimed. So he borrowed a horse from his brother and went to town anyhow. He hunted Fisher up and told him the situation, so Fisher became very mad. They were in a saloon and Fisher was trying to make Maurice take the muzzle of his six shooter in his mouth and smoke it. Maurice had an older brother living in Evansville. This brother, Fine Shannon, had learned what was going on so he armed himself and went to the saloon where the trouble was going on. As he walked in the door, John Fisher was cursing Maurice trying to make him take the muzzle of his pistol. Fine Shannon said, "Put your gun up, John. Put it up. Put it up," and as he said "Put it up" the third time, he shot John Fisher squarely between the eyes killing him instantly. This started a feud called the Fisher-Shannon feud in which six or eight men were killed. Some innocent men who had no interest in the feud killed finally Fine Shannon. And others secured commissions as Deputy U.S. Marshalls and drove the Fishers out of the country.

While I was postmaster at Evansville, a group of young Indian rowdies got so they would come to town every Saturday morning, get drunk, and as they would leave, they would run their horses up and down the streets, shooting right and left, terrorizing the town. A group of good citizens came to me and proposed that I go to Fayetteville and see the sheriff and see if he would appoint a local deputy sheriff there to preserve the peace. Before I went to Fayetteville, I went to see an old man named A. G. Lewis, and asked him if he would serve as deputy sheriff. He said he would if the people would back him up which they agreed they would. So I went to Fayetteville, saw the sheriff who gave me a commission making Uncle Gats Lewis (we called him) his deputy for that township.

Uncle Gats was a blacksmith and ran a blacksmith shop there. Somehow the rowdies learned what had been done. So the first thing we knew they came charging down the main street, whooping, yelling, and shooting right and left. They ran down the street about 300 yards where they stopped and passed a jug of whiskey around. About that time I noticed Uncle Gats coming out of his shop with a Winchester under his



arm and wiping his glasses with his red bandanna handkerchief. He walked out to a hitching rack, laid his Winchester across the hitch rack and spow, spow, spow. At the third shot they broke into a run and down the road, the last we heard of them that day. He had shot one of them through the thigh, not serious though.

They sent word they would shoot the town up the next Saturday. But fortunately they didn't try. Every man in the little town was fixed for them and there would have been several badly hurt. That stopped it. They never tried that stunt again. Wasn't long until they were coming back to mill and trading like nothing had ever happened, and from that time on it was a peaceable village.

As a boy I loved the girls but was so bashful that I was terribly embarrassed when a girl noticed me. My first sweetheart was nearly old enough to be my mother -- at least 10 or 12 years older than I was. But I was desperately in love with her. Sometimes she would grab me and kiss me right before all the crowd of pupils. It sure thrilled me but I was terribly embarrassed and would run and hide. As a small boy I had several sweethearts, all much older than I was.

When a boy in my teens, three girls from Evansville came to spend the week-end with my sister Ida, among them a girl a year younger than I was, that I fell in love with. She seemed to fall for me too. For some five or six years we were sweethearts. It is said that the course of true love never runs smoothly. This was true in our case but finally in 1887 just before my father's death we became engaged, and in March 1889 we were married.

Before this, however, my mother had remarried a man named Sam Grant. We children didn't think Mr. Grant would make our mother happy and we did all we could to persuade her not to marry him but to no avail. He was a hard-working man and seemed to love mother but he was not good to my sisters, so that brought discord, so he left her. Later they made up and he came back. This happened several times till finally his son ( who had married a cousin, Florence Greer, Uncle Tom's oldest daughter ) and I got together and we succeeded in keeping them apart. They were not divorced and there were no hard feelings. He died several years before my mother died. Several years before her death, my mother lost her eyesight. She could never become reconciled to her blindness but could tat and sew as long as she lived. The last years of her life she lived with my brother-in-law and sister in St. Louis. They were devoted to her, as were all of the children. She had always worked, and not being able to work any longer seemed to break her heart.

The first year after our marriage my wife and I lived at Evansville and I farmed with my step-father, Mr. Grant, and taught school at old Vineyard. I thought he tried to beat me out of my part of the crop, so we only farmed together one season. I rented some land and made a crop the second year and taught another term of school, three months at old Vineyard at \$35 per month.

In December 1889, our first-born, a son named for our father, came into our home. I was sure proud of him. I taught a third term of school



at old Vineyard in 1891. Most of my pupils were akin to me or I had gone to school with them, so I had a hard time convincing them I was the teacher. So next year I turned down the offer of a fourth term, was appointed to be Postmaster at Evansville. The salary was meager, barely affording a living, as our family was growing. A daughter, Pansy Lee, was born in December 1891, and in 1894 a second son came to bless our home.

About this time the Kansas City, Pittsburg and Gulf Railway was building into Siloam Springs, so I decided I'd like to become a railroader. So in 1895 I got a position in the ticket office on the KCP&G in Siloam Springs and moved to Siloam Springs and went to work in the spring of 1895. Our second daughter was born there in 1896. After all this time, studying office work and telegraphy, I was shocked at the salary offered me as Agent at Baron Fork, the munificent salary of \$25 per month. So I transferred to the mechanical department to become a machinist. Shortly after this they having established a roundhouse at Stilwell, Okla., they moved the division to that place. Railroad wages were poor, for up to this time the railroad men had no labor unions and all the workers were what organized workers called scabs.

I had signed up as machinist's helper and had become a pretty fair fireman, so, as they were scarce of extra firemen, they got to calling me out on the runs as a fireman. I had no desire to be a fireman or engineer, so one day when they called me to go out firing, that particular time to fire to Pittsburg, Kansas, and had to deadhead back, having as pay \$1.85 for the two days. I told the foreman I didn't want to fire and that I could make almost as much money working a farm job and cut the hazardous job of firing and that I would not go any more, and he agreed not to call me for to fire again as fireman. About a week later they called me to go out firing the passenger. At first I refused to go, but finally, to save the foreman embarrassment, I agreed to go and made the trip.

The engineer, Charlie Hearst, was mad as a hornet because they didn't have one of the regular firemen sent down from Pittsburg to fire the engine in for him. I had never fired a passenger engine before. So when I climbed on the engine I said, "Charlie, anything you show or tell me will be appreciated." He ripped out an oath and said he could not show me a d---d thing. I saw he was mad and would take his spite out on me. I knew I could keep the engine hot, so didn't say a word in reply. The engine crews were all trying to make good records in fuel burned, so I had a good head of steam when we pulled out of the Stilwell yards and I kept shoveling in the coal and when we pulled into each station the locomotive would pop off. This went on till we were pulling into Gravette, when Hearst said "Greer, get up here and watch till I look at the fire", which I did. After he had looked in the fire box and come back to take his place at the throttle, he said "You sure have it hot; don't put in any more coal till I tell you to." So from then on, he would tell me when we were about at the top of grades so in spite of the extra coal I had burned the first 50 miles, when we arrived at Pittsburg he said I had burned less coal than his regular fireman usually did.

So they deadheaded me back to Stilwell and I went into the foreman's office and called for my time. He begged me not to quit but I had



enough, and my mother was begging me to move back to our old home and take over the farm, which I did. I lived on the farm and worked till in the spring of 1900. Some of my friends wanted me to make the race for County Clerk of our county. Finally I decided to make the race. By this time our family had grown, as we had four boys and two girls, and it sure kept me humping to make a living. After I had announced for the race, two other nice young men from our end of the county had also announced for County Clerk. I knew that with the three of us running, I had no chance to be nominated, but decided I would run through and if defeated, which I felt sure I would be, I would bide my time and run again in 1904. In November 1903 a fifth son was born into our family. So when the spring of 1904 rolled around I announced as a candidate for County Clerk. I had seven opponents but when the vote was announced I had a good margin majority and was nominated, which assured me of election, and I was elected in September at the general election.

In the meantime tragic things and times were affecting my dear wife's family. I think it was in 1897 that my wife's youngest sister died of tuberculosis, and each year thereafter a member of their family died until in 1903 five of her family had died of TB. That year her last living sister died and the mother had gone too. Later in 1904 her brother died, all of tuberculosis.

We had used every precaution except not visiting the family, and while I could not say "You must not go", I felt her going could mean nothing but that finally she would contract it. So in the fall of 1904 she was in such miserable health that I put her under the care of a doctor who had made the treatment of TB a specialty. He told us she had not yet contracted it, but I suggested that we go west to a better climate. But depending on the doctor's word, she said "No". So in 1905 she was not gaining but finally agreed to change to another physician. We went to Dr. Ellis. After a thorough examination he said she had TB, so I suggested she go to the sanatorium for treatment. She said "No, it's no use. I haven't many months to live and I want to stay at home with you and the children what time I have left." She never lacked for anything we could do. I knew she was living that summer constantly in prayer. So a few days before her death. We lived on East Mountain. Her bed was just inside a large sunny south window. My bed by her side, on the outside of the window. One morning she waked me, shouting and praising God. She told me she had been praying for months that our family would not have to go as hers had gone. She said God had blessed her and she was sure if we would all be careful, none of the rest of our family would die of TB. I don't know what had happened but I am convinced that our Heavenly Father had given her the assurance none of us would ever have to die that way if we took proper care of ourselves, though several years later our youngest daughter died with TB. She had had a severe case of flu and had been neglected by her husband until when I sent my wife to look after her, she was too far gone to recover. But if her doctor had done his duty, as he should have, she could have been saved, for after my wife had argued with her husband and finally had pinned her doctor down, he admitted that she had TB. We moved her home at once and the very first time our Doctor examined her, he said she could live but a short time.

My first wife's father was a native born Arkansan as was her mother. Her grandfather, Hugh Flinn, was born and reared in Ireland and had



learned as an apprentice the stone mason's trade and was a very fine mechanic. He helped cut the stone columns of the state capital building at Jefferson City, Mo. Her father was born and reared in Crawford County, Arkansas, born in 1847. He died at Evansville in 1909. Mrs. Julia Flinn was born in Franklin County in 1848 and died in Evansville in 1902.

After I had served four years as county and probate clerk of Washington County, in 1908 I was elected county and probate judge. I was reelected in 1910 and served four years as county and probate judge. In 1919 I accepted an appointment as county farm agent for Carroll County which position I held in that county for ten years. In 1925 I was transferred to North Sebastian County where I served for one year with headquarters at Fort Smith. In the fall of 1925, I made the mistake of my life, resigning the position as county agent and moved to Texas where I practiced irrigated farming ten years, ruined myself financially and with my health broken and ruined, I moved back to my native county to spend my declining days, having for the past five years been an invalid or semi-invalid. God has been the guiding star of my life. I have been blessed far beyond my deserving. My first wife was a devout Christian, and though our married life was about only 14 years, it was a happy one. Then I married a second time -- Miss Lulah B. Smith, another sweet Christian who mothered my children and has been a real pal these 33 years. We have never fussed or quarrelled. I have tried to live as a Christian should. I have made many errors and mistakes but have always found my Master a kind loving Father, a kind forgiving Father, for I've never gone to Him in penitence and asked His forgiveness that He has not done so. To my children and grandchildren, I want to commend Him as a loving Father who never turns those who love Him and trust Him away.

I hope that I have lived so you, my dear ones, can look back to our family ties with reverence, and to the God who has so abundantly blessed me and my poor weak efforts of service I commend you. He is the one that no one can afford to go through life without. You will find that He is a very present help in every time of need.

I hope you will all always remember that "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth". And that though you may have to suffer great losses, suffer great pain and undergo almost impossible hardships, you may not know the reason, you will always remember that what He does is all right. Remember that life is not intended to be a picnic primarily, but rather a school for discipline and training. The rewards are to follow after. He said on one occasion, "Whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die", and "All things work together for good to them that love God", "There is no victory without a battle, no crown without a cross". The severest of all trials and the grandest of all the victories of history are recorded in the following words, "He humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name".

Most of this sketch is written from memory and I am sure there may be some mistakes and some names I left blank where I couldn't remember. I had hoped to be able to add later if they were blank, but I was unable to. I am getting old and cannot think or write as connectedly as

I once could. Our family may not be as illustrious as many are, but our immediate ancestors were good people. None have been accused of crime, and most of them were Christian men and women, and I hope my own immediate family.

-- Ben F. Greer























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